

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A suture anchor, comprising;
 - a bone engaging section formed along a bone engaging axis;
 - a bone engaging structure formed along said bone engaging section and defining a maximum diameter of the suture anchor;
 - a suture engaging section extending from said bone engaging section and defining a diameter less than or equal to said maximum diameter;
 - an eyelet formed in said suture engaging section to allow a selected portion of a suture to pass through and extend from said suture engaging section generally along said bone engaging axis; and
 - a suture passage defined by said suture engaging section such that the selected portion of the suture remains substantially within said maximum diameter.
2. (original) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein said bone engaging section and said suture engaging section are substantially integrally formed as a single unit.
3. (original) The suture anchor of claim 2, wherein the material of said single unit is selected from a group including stainless steel, cobalt chromium alloys, bio-absorbable polymers, and combinations thereof.

4. (original) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein said bone engaging structure includes a thread formed along said bone engaging section, wherein a maximum diameter of said thread defines said maximum diameter of the suture anchor.

5. (original) The suture anchor of claim 4, wherein said thread is formed only on said bone engaging section.

6. (original) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein:
said suture engaging section is able to be substantially disposed below an exterior surface of a boney structure after implantation;
said eyelet is substantially exposed and accessible after implantation of the suture anchor.

7. (currently amended) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein said [[an]] eyelet includes at least a first eyelet and a second eyelet wherein said suture passage interconnects said first eyelet and said second eyelet such that a suture may be passed through said first eyelet through said passage and through said second eyelet and be held substantially within said suture engaging section.

8. (original) The suture anchor of claim 7, wherein said suture passage allows a suture to be passed to an exterior of said suture engaging section at a point other than said first eyelet and said second eyelet.

9. (original) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein a suture passed through said suture passage is passed substantially only through said suture engaging section.

10. – 18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) A suture anchor to provide a fixation of a suture in a selected anatomical portion, comprising:

an anatomical engaging section having an anatomical engaging portion;

and

a suture engaging section extending from said anatomical engaging section;

wherein said suture engaging section defines a first suture eyelet and a second suture eyelet;

wherein said suture engaging section defines a suture holding passage interconnecting said first suture eyelet and said second suture eyelet to substantially hold a suture relative to said anatomical engaging section;

wherein said suture engaging section is adapted to be positioned generally within a ~~selected portion of~~ sidewall defined in said selected anatomical portion.

20. (original) The suture anchor of claim 19, wherein said anatomical engaging section and said suture engaging section are generally formed as a single piece of a single material.

21. (canceled)

22. (original) The suture anchor of claim 19, wherein said suture holding passage includes a first passage section and a second passage section formed at an angle relative to each other to have an exterior angle of at least 90°.

23. (original) The suture anchor of claim 19, wherein a suture is positionable through said first suture eyelet, said suture holding passage, and said second suture eyelet such that said suture is generally able to at least extend from one of said suture engaging section generally parallel and along an axis of said anatomical engaging section.

24. (original) The suture anchor of claim 19, wherein said anatomical engaging section and said suture engaging section are adapted to be substantially received within the selected anatomical portion such that said suture engaging section is generally co-extensive with an exterior portion of said selected anatomical portion.

25. (withdrawn) A suture anchor to anchor a suture in a selected bone portion, comprising:

a first member, including:

a bone engaging portion to engage a selected bone region;

a suture protecting portion to substantially limit contact of the suture with the bone portion;

a second member, including:

a suture engaging portion to hold a suture relative to said first member;

a first member engaging portion;

wherein the suture engages said suture engaging portion and is protected from generally contacting the selected bone portion after implantation of the suture anchor.

26. (withdrawn) The suture anchor of claim 25, wherein said bone engaging portion and said suture protecting portion of said first member are integrally formed from a substantially a unitary portion.

27. (withdrawn) The suture anchor of claim 25, wherein said suture engaging portion and said first member engaging portion of said second member are substantially integrally formed as a single unit.

28. – 30. (canceled)

31. (withdrawn) The suture anchor of claim 25, wherein said suture protecting portion extends from the selected bone portion such that the suture does not contact the selected bone portion.

32. (withdrawn) The suture anchor of claim 25, wherein said suture engaging portion includes:

a suture eyelet such that the suture may pass through said suture engaging portion;

a suture passage extending proximally from said suture eyelet such that said second member may be passed through an interior of said first member while the suture does not substantially engage the interior of said first member.

33. (canceled)

34. (withdrawn) The suture of claim 25, wherein said first member engaging portion is able to engage said first member as said bone engaging portion engages the selected bone portion such that said second member is held relative to said selected bone portion and the suture is held relative said second member.

35. (withdrawn) The suture anchor of claim 25, wherein said first member and said second member are substantially integrally formed as a single unit.

36. (withdrawn) The suture anchor of claim 25, wherein said first member and said second member are substantially independent and distinct of one another;

wherein said second member is inoperably engageable with said first member to fix said second member in a location relative to said first member;

wherein said first member is rotatable relative to said second member.

37. – 38. (canceled)

39. (Previously Presented) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein the suture engaging section is spaced a distance axially from the bone engaging section.

40. (Previously Presented) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein the suture engaging section is positioned substantially within a boundary defined by the bone engaging section.

41. (canceled)

42. (Previously Presented) The suture anchor of claim 41, wherein said suture engaging section defines a second axis; and

wherein a suture is operable to extend from the eyelet substantially parallel with at least one of the bone engaging axis, the second axis, or both the bone engaging axis and the second axis.

43. (New) The suture anchor of Claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said suture passage defines an enclosed bore extending substantially parallel to said bone engaging axis.

44. (New) The suture anchor of Claim 19, wherein said suture holding passage includes an enclosed passage defined in the suture engaging section; wherein the suture is operable to be held completely within said suture engaging section via said suture holding passage.

45. (New) The suture anchor of Claim 19, wherein said first suture eyelet and said second suture eyelet are both formed through one surface of said suture engaging section.

46. (New) The suture anchor of Claim 43, wherein said eyelet includes a first eyelet and a second eyelet both formed through a proximal face of said suture engaging section and said suture passage interconnects said first eyelet and said second eyelet.

47. (New) A suture anchor system, comprising;
a bone engaging portion formed along a bone engaging axis;
a bone engaging structure formed along said bone engaging portion and defining a maximum diameter;
a suture engaging portion defining a diameter less than or equal to said maximum diameter and having an end surface;
at least two eyelets formed in said end surface of said suture engaging portion to allow a selected portion of a suture to pass through and extend from said suture engaging portion generally along said bone engaging axis; and
a suture passage defined by said suture engaging portion such that the selected portion of the suture remains substantially within said maximum diameter.

48. (New) The suture anchor system of claim 47, wherein said bone engaging portion and said suture engaging portion are integrally formed as a single member.

49. (New) The suture anchor system of claim 47, wherein said end surface is formed at an end of the suture engaging portion configured to extend away from said bone engaging portion.

50. (New) The suture anchor system of claim 47, further comprising:
an access to a first portion of said suture passage extending through a side wall of said suture engaging portion configured to allow access to said suture passage through the side wall.